

Lynn Rivers'

Capitol Corner

106th Congress, January/February Edition

A newsletter by Congresswoman Lynn N. Rivers representing Michigan's 13th Congressional District



January/February 2000

Dear Friends,

There are few issues closer to my heart than education. This month's newsletter discusses the federal role in education, and major federal education legislation passed in the first session of the 106th Congress.

The new year brings more opportunities for me to talk with you about these and other issues. I look forward to seeing you at my official events in the 13th District, and continuing to advocate for your concerns in the second session of the 106th Congress.

Sincerely,

Lynn N. Rivers

The Federal Role in Education

The authorizations of appropriations for most programs of federal aid to elementary and secondary education, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act are scheduled to expire during the 106th Congress. The reauthorization process for these programs has sparked considerable debate over the federal role in education.

The education programs sponsored by federal dollars fall into four categories: 1) programs for the education of *disadvantaged* children; 2) programs that help pay the costs of *systemwide support* (*Education*, page 3)

1997-98 Michigan Public School District Revenues

Statewide Revenues:	General Fund		Debt Retirement		Capital Projects		School Service	
	Total	Per Pupil	Total	Per Pupil	Total	Per Pupil	Total	Per Pupil
Local Sources	\$2,006,520,882	\$1,184	\$714,820,682	\$422	\$212,717,711	\$126	\$279,051,268	\$165
Other Political Subdivisions	\$706,199	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$224,542	\$0
State Sources	\$9,089,960,100	\$5,365	\$12,065	\$0	\$11,678,585	\$7	\$14,212,237	\$8
Federal Sources	\$487,641,865	\$288	\$7,887	\$0	\$20,979	\$0	\$170,106,850	\$100
Total Revenues	\$11,584,829,046	\$6,837	\$714,840,634	\$422	\$224,417,275	\$133	\$463,594,897	\$273

General Fund: Fund used to record all revenue and expenditures pertaining to education.

Capital Projects Fund: Fund earmarked for use in acquiring and remodeling new school sites, buildings and equipment.

School Service Fund: Funds used for food services, community services, bookstore, and interscholastic athletics.

Washington Office
1724 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-6261

email
Lynn.Rivers@mail.house.gov
internet
<http://www.house.gov/rivers>

13th District Office
301 W. Michigan Ave., Ste. 400
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
(734) 485-3741

Major Education Reauthorization Bills of the 106th Congress

◆ **H.R. 1995, Teacher Empowerment Act.** H.R. 1995, passed by the House July 20, 1999, replaces three programs—Eisenhower Professional Development, Goals 2000 state grants, and the CSR program. Under H.R. 1995, districts would have to use an unspecified portion of their funding for professional development in mathematics and science and for reducing class size. Funds may also be used for teacher recruitment, retention and improvement. In addition, the bill supports “teacher opportunity payments,” which allow teachers to choose their own professional development.

Under further provisions of this bill, states would have to hold districts and schools accountable for making annual progress toward performance indicators developed by districts and schools regarding student achievement.

◆ **FY 2000 Education Appropriations** provided funds to hire 100,000 new teachers and reduce class size.

◆ **H.R. 2300, Academic Achievement for All Act (Straight A’s Act).** This proposal, passed by the House on October 21, 1999, combines elements of traditional block grants and the Ed-Flex program. Under this bill, up to 10 states or individual local education agencies in non-participating states may choose to administer one or more specified education programs under a performance agreement. The performance agreement would waive many requirements under several federal education programs; funds could be used for any educational purpose authorized under state law. Specifically, Title I requirements to target funds on each LEA’s highest poverty schools, would no longer apply. The proponents of the bill are using it as a demonstration project in anticipation of extending the program to more states.

For more information on these, and other federal education programs, visit the Department of Education’s website:
<http://web99.ed.gov>

◆ **H.R. 2, Student Results Act.** H.R. 2, which passed in the House on October 21, 1999, amends and extends elements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (including Title I), the Women’s Educational Equity Act, and the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students program. Selected provisions of H.R. 2 include:

Amendments to Title I:

- Title I provisions regarding standards, assessments, and corrective action would be expanded. States would be required to adopt standards and assessments in science, in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics.
- In the selection of schools to conduct Title I programs, H.R. 2 would authorize local education agencies to place priority on elementary schools, even among schools in the highest poverty category.
- The enrollment size threshold for the current exemption from Title I requirements regarding school selection would be increased from the current 1,000 pupils to 1,500 pupils.
- The poverty threshold for establishing schoolwide programs would be lowered from 50% to 40%.

Amendments to the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1994 authorize a state formula grant program for teacher preparation and other services for the gifted to be initiated when the annual appropriation first equals or exceeds \$50 million.

Stop by my coffee hours and express your opinions on some of the federal education issues:

- ★ Improving the effectiveness of federal aid for the education of the disadvantaged
- ★ Block grants and regulatory flexibility
- ★ Standards-based reform
- ★ Technology in the classroom

Community Clippings

I have received numerous letters regarding an alleged Bill 602P, introduced by a fictitious Congressman, Tony Schnell, which would impose a surcharge on sending e-mail. I want to assure you that this tale is absolutely false. No such bill has been introduced in either the House or Senate, and it is **unlikely** any such bill **will** be introduced.

Variations on this rumor have circulated since 1987, when the Federal Communications Commission did consider imposing a surcharge for transmitting data over the public phone network. However, the FCC rejected the idea (thanks, in part, to the thousands of Americans who wrote in to voice their complaints).

Most of us still have to dial up over a modem to connect with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). If your ISP is in your local dialing area, you probably don't (and won't) pay anything for the call, regardless of how long you stay connected.

For more information about this, and other urban legends, see: <http://snopes.simplenet.com>.

(*Education*, from cover)

services or curricula in priority subject areas; 3) programs that support the development and dissemination of educational *innovations*, research, technical assistance and assessments; and 4) programs to help pay the costs of educating pupils whose parents live or work on *federal property* (like Indian Reservations). As the table on page one shows, federal money supplements the state and local funds which make up the bulk of school budgets.

The current Congressional debate over education has focused on overarching questions concerning the primary purpose of federal aid to education, its intended beneficiaries and its outcomes. Congress has addressed the federal role in setting education standards, expanding school choice options, and providing for greater state and local flexibility. Parts of this debate have led to resolutions which recommend the content of local curriculum, proposals to boost funding for charter schools, and reforms that encourage implementation of teacher qualification

standards. Through these proposals, some federal policy makers have sought a more activist role in improving local schools.

As a former school board member, I firmly support finding local solutions to local problems. School districts should be given as much leeway as possible to determine how to use federal funds.

At the same time, I am disturbed by the structure of one of the recent block grant programs established last session. Federal funding is significant in that it allows schools to provide programs targeted to the needs of specific populations. Title I, which supports programs for economically disadvantaged students, is perhaps the best known of these targeted federal programs. Last year, H.R. 2300, the "Straight A's Act," created a pilot program whereby schools can administer specified federal education programs, including Title I, under performance agreements. In essence, this will allow schools to reallocate funds from programs that aid disadvantaged students to pay for school improvements like swimming pools, as long as the school's academic ratings continue to rise. As strongly as I support local control of school districts, I draw the line at Title I. Those funds should not be used for any other purpose than educating disadvantaged students.

Secretary of Education Richard Riley has said that, "The only way to fix public schools is to fix public schools." I would add to his comments by saying that the best way for the federal government to fix public schools is to support local and state education agencies' own reform efforts, but ensure that the needs of all student populations are met. The federal government should allow maximum flexibility, yet protect programs like Title I.

Lynn Rivers' Capitol Corner

If you would like to receive this monthly newsletter in the mail, please return the form below. If you have already sent in the form once, you need not send it again.

Congresswoman Lynn Rivers
301 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 400
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

(Mr./Mrs./Ms.)

Name

Address

Lynn is hosting the following events in February:



Office Hours

Friday, February 11

8:30am-10:00am

Coffee Bean

884 Penniman

Plymouth

Monday February 21

8:30am-10:00am

Sweetwaters Cafe

123 W. Washington

Ann Arbor

Monday, February 21

2:30pm-4:00pm

TinPan Saloon

19350 Sumpter Road

Sumpter Twp.

Monday, February 28

8:30am-10:00am

Leon's Family Dining

303 S. Wayne Road

Westland



Town Hall

Saturday, February 19

10:30am-12:00pm

Northville City Hall

215 W. Main Street

Northville



Forum

Health Care Policy in America

Tuesday, February 22

7:00pm-9:00pm

Washtenaw Community College

Morris Lawrence Building, Room 101

4800 E. Huron River Dr.

Ann Arbor

Would You Like to Receive *Capitol Corner* Via E-Mail Rather than by Post?

Join Lynn's new *Capitol Corner* e-mailing list by calling, writing or e-mailing the district office with your name, e-mail address and postal address. The newsletter will be sent as an attachment in PDF format. You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the document.



Lynn values your privacy. Your e-mail address will not be distributed to third parties or used for any other purpose than sending you *Capitol Corner*.



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Washington, DC 20515-2213

Official Business

THIS MAILING WAS PREPARED, PUBLISHED, AND
MAILED AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE

Lynn N. Rivers

M.C.
Bulk Rate

**13th Congressional District
Constituent**